

**Re: Maternal transmission of SARS-COV-2 to the neonate, and possible routes for such transmission: a systematic review and critical analysis**

Sir,

We read with interest the article by Kate F. Walker and colleagues entitled 'Maternal transmission of SARS-COV-2 to the neonate, and possible routes for such transmission: a systematic review and critical analysis'.¹

In the article, the authors systematically analysed the mode of delivery on the infection rates of COVID-19 in the newborn. Despite the limitations, especially the retrospective nature of studies examined, this study provided important information about the selection of mode of delivery of women with COVID-19. It suggests that neonatal

infection rates are not different after caesarean birth or vaginal delivery.

However, the severity of the COVID-19 infection of the mothers was not considered. Clinically, pregnant women with the more severe COVID-19 infection appear to prefer delivery by caesarean delivery rather than vaginal birth.²⁻⁴ Therefore, it is possible that any beneficial effects of caesarean birth in reducing transmission of COVID-19 might not be apparent because the severity of COVID-19 infection was greater in these women. This selective bias would weaken the conclusions of current studies.

We feel that prospective evaluation of the safety of mode of delivery with COVID-19 is required. ■

References

- 1 Walker KF, O'Donoghue K, Grace N, Dorling J, Comeau JL, Li W, et al. Maternal transmission

of SARS-COV-2 to the neonate, and possible routes for such transmission: a systematic review and critical analysis. *BJOG* 2020; <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0528.16362>.

- 2 The Lancet. Emerging understandings of 2019-nCoV. *Lancet* 2020;395:311.

- 3 Qi H, Luo X, Zheng Y, Zhang H, Li J, Zou L, et al. Safe delivery for pregnancies affected by COVID-19. *BJOG* 2020;127:927-9.

- 4 Liu X, Chen M, Wang Y, Sun L, Zhang J, Shi Y, et al. Prenatal anxiety and obstetric decisions among pregnant women in Wuhan and Chongqing during the COVID-19 outbreak: a cross-sectional study. *BJOG* 2020; <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0528.16381>.

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